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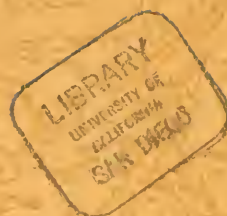


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THE Bernhardt Edition

THE
ONLY CORRECT
VERSION OF MY
PLAYS TRANSLATED
AND PRINTED FROM
MY OWN PROMPT-
BOOKS."

Sarah Bernhardt
1896

FEDORA.

AS REPRESENTED BY
MME SARAH BERNHARDT
AND COMPANY UNDER
THE MANAGEMENT
OF

MESSRS ABBEY, SCHOEFFEL & GRAU.

PUBLISHED BY
F. RULLMAN
THEATRE TICKET OFFICE
111 BROADWAY NEW YORK.

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THE KNABE PIANOS.

TESTIMONIALS FROM DISTINGUISHED ARTISTS, COMPOSERS AND MUSICIANS.

THALBERG, the great composer and musician, wrote of the Knabe pianos that they were "distinguished for their evenness and volume of tone, and their easy and agreeable touch."

GOTTSCHALK, whose name is still beloved in this country, said of them, "I do not hesitate to declare them equal, if not superior, to the best manufactured in Europe or this country by the most celebrated makers."

MARTELL, the celebrated professor of the Conservatory of Music, Paris, said the Knabe pianos are instruments of the first merit, and regretted that they were not exhibited at the great Paris Exposition of 1867, as "the name of Knabe would certainly have added additional honor and success to American industry and skill."

SIR JULIUS BENEDICT, the renowned English composer and conductor, declared, after personal use of a Knabe piano, that it was "one of the most perfect pianos I ever met with; their success, whether in a large concert-hall or in a private drawing-room, does not admit of the slightest doubt, and will become as universal as well deserved."

TERESA CARRENO, the eminent pianist, renowned in Europe as well as America, chose the Knabe Grands for her concert tour because she "had carefully tested all the prominent pianos in America, and had found in the Knabe warerooms the piano which gave her satisfaction in every point, and which could sustain her most efficiently in the severe task before her."

FANNIE BLOOMFIELD ZEISLER, the distinguished pianist, and the favorite pupil of Leschetitzky, the husband of Madame Essipoff, after "having used the Knabe pianos for several years, both in numerous concerts and at home," indorsed them as "most wonderful instruments," and said of them: "They excel in a refined, sympathetic tone of surprising singing quality, and of greatest volume and depth, perfection in action and touch, and remarkable durability, and stand in tune under the severest usage."

The late EDMUND NEUPERT, the distinguished Danish pianist, preferred the Knabe Grand, because, as he said, "I have never used an instrument which has met all the requirements of an artist more completely than those of the Knabe make."

WILHELM GANZ, another celebrated composer and musician, who resided for many years in England, gave it as his opinion that "these instruments are in every respect most perfect in tone and touch."

BERNHARD SCHOLZ, the composer, after using the Knabe Grands at his concerts in Breslau, Germany, unhesitatingly stated that "they are as near perfection as can be made." This opinion was indorsed by DR. JULIUS SCHAEFER, the royal professor and musical director, who pronounced them "absolute perfection."

The late DR. DAMROSCH, founder of the Oratorio and Symphony Societies, whose name will be forever honored in the musical annals of this country, preferred the Knabe pianos to all others because they were "perfect in power and sweetness of tone, remarkable for the easy and even touch."

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Mr. VICTORIEN SARDOU.

An original writer is not he who imitates no one, but he who no one can imitate. Shakespeare called the plots of his best pieces from legends bequeathed to the World by his predecessors, and Molière admitted with the most artless good faith, "*qu'il a pris son bien où il l'a trouvé.*" Both, however, are inimitable; out of the raw metal which they fused they contrived to issue coin bearing their individual stamp. Of a hundred writers treating a given subject, only one would be capable of imprinting it with the seal of his personality.

Personality; all the immense worth of Victorien Sardou is defined by that one word. Philosophy and charm, science and art, all take through him. In him, and by him an actual and a clearly engraved physiognomy, which it is impossible not to recognize, and which would be foolish and unjust to try to ignore. In the course of his active and triumphant career, Sardou has several times had occasion to give his valuable advice upon certain works; to touch up a scene, or to slip in a judicious word, to heighten a situation here, or to develop a character there. However anonymous these retouches might be, though, it was impossible not to distinguish them at first glance, any one trait being sufficient to reveal the master-hand.

Victorien Sardou's father, who was a distinguished spirit, great scholar, and thorough lexicographer, to whom also we owe a very precious edition of Rabelais, sent the boy, to grow at his freedom in Drienon l'Archevêque, one of the prettiest villages imaginable. Brought back to Paris, the young man entered first the *École de Commerce de Charonne* and afterwards the College Henry IV. Who knows if, from these two different sources of education, there do not arise in Sardou's work its happy admixture of the open frankness of practical life and the delicacy of classic art. Ardent, curious to see and to know, he commenced the study of medicine, but even then the dramatic instinct had awakened in him, and already having taken up his pen, he endeavored to give scenic form to his thoughts,—a form so difficult to seize, since it is the result of action told in dialogue.

Les amis imaginaires, which perhaps gave birth to *Nos Intimes* and *La Reine Vêpa*, are the first conceptions of Sardou, who soon, however, taking bolder flight, attacked Bernard Palissy in verse, some published fragments of which bespeak the dramatic author as well as the mere writer.

A prey to the difficulties of existence; poor and wishing to devote himself entirely to his art, Sardou, pale, thin and delicate, had to yield himself up to

ceaseless work in order to live; giving lessons and collaborating with compilers of dictionaries and encyclopedias of all kinds, gaining his bread at the point of his pen, contributing, among other works, some excellent articles to the "*Nouvelle Biographie Générale*," by Doctor Hoefer, and constantly adding to the stores of his learning, and making provisions of arms for the literary combat. Alas! the first literary battle of this courageous soldier was to end in disorder. The conqueror began with defeat. *La Taverne des Etudiants*, a comedy in three acts of verse, was, in spite of its amusing qualities, its originality and its many fine lines, a non-success, a failure, a *fiasco* (we may as well say the word) of the most pronounced description; piteous baptism of fire, which retarded for several years the blossoming of the ardent hopes of the indomitable wrestler. In this plight poor Sardou, shattered but still in a fever of ambitious expectancy, was forced to stand aside and see himself passed by for the successes of that year, 1854, which remained a never to be forgotten year for him.

It was then that Sardou, having entered into partnership with Paul Feval, a novelist of the gloomy order, who, in spite of many efforts had, up to that period, obtained no success in the theatre—suddenly signed *Le Bossu*, one of the sword and cloak school of drama, and certainly one of the most charming and the best contrived since the days of Dumas père.

Sardou, when young, had the profile of Bonaparte, as he has now that of Erasmus—having made allowances for the period, he threw into the fire all the used up tricks, worn out phrases, old fashioned platitudes, and in each new work he extended his method. It was then they had Sardou in his early style; airy, amusing, ironical, as in the *Pattes de mouche*, the *Femmes fortes*, *Nos Intimes* and *La Famille Benoitou*, in the *Vieuse Garçons* and *Maison Neuve*, exquisite productions, wherein one feels that the author has been the first to take delight in them. Later on he wrote *Seraphine* and *Fernande*, both of which are pieces of the first order of merit.

One day, one of the brightest which has shed lustre upon Sardou's glory, he turned his attention to the drama of *Patrie*, and again to *La Haine*, a tragedy-act at once superior, elevated and, in every way, wonderful. In both these powerful dramas Sardou has stirred up the noblest passions and the purest sentiments. They equal the efforts of the oldest matters as much by their lofty aims as by their style and conception. Then came the war,—that terrible war of 1870. The revolution, which followed in its train, furnished Sardou with one of his most thrilling inspirations, *Rabagas*, a magnificent picture and a cruel satire; a political comedy, wherein the state of the minds, manners, hopes and follies at the moment are faithfully set forth.

Patrie, *La Haine*, *Rabagas*, *Theodora* and *Fedora* are the culminating points of Sardou's prodigious talent.

Do you wish to laugh? There is *l'Ecureuil*, an indescribable *fantaisie*; there is *Le Magot*, a topsy-turvy *folie*, irresistibly contagious; there is *Les Gens Nerveux*; there is *Les Ganuches*; and there is *Divorçons*, a *bouffonerie*, containing one of the most bitterly philosophical comedies of the day.

If you prefer that sweet emotion where one's tears are brightened by a tender smile, we have *Andrea*; we have *Fereol*, we have *Dora*, we have *Odette*,

and we have *Georgette*, where the author makes us weep even while he is supporting a theory, one of the most arduous and exciting theories of the nineteenth century, namely, the redemption of a Magdalen by the means of maternity.

If you would rather have a subject picture, choose *Don Quichotte* ; choose *l'Oncle Sam* ; choose *Les Femmes fortes* , choose *Les Papillons* ; *Nos Intimes*, or *Les Merveilleuses*, a priceless pearl set in the purest gold. If you incline towards the terrible, to the quick drawn emotion of modern passions, try *Les Diables Noirs*, try *Fernande*, or *Maison Neuve*, or *Fedora* ; without reckoning those which I can only say are not less interesting, such as *La Perle Noire*, *Les Bourgeois de Pantarey* and *Daniel Rochat*.

On the 8th of February, 1877 (and a just reward it was for his honest labor to sustain and perpetuate the artistic glory of France), Victorien Sardou was elected a member of the Academie Française, *one of the immortal forty* !

When young, Sardou dissected the heart of man anatomically. Later on, towards 1861, we find him seeking the soul through spiritualism, and that is not one of the least curious means his intellect employed in its quest of the new and the unknown.

In those days there existed a Society of Spiritualists, presided over by a certain Rivail, ex-manager of one of the Boulevard theatres, christened Allan-Kardoc "by a spirit," that of a suicide probably, for in these seances they chiefly invoked those who had of their own will passed unbidden into eternity, such as Gerard de Nerval, for instance.

Sardou held a distinguished position amongst these adepts, and published in his capacity of Medium a "*Voyage fait dans la planete de Jupiter*."

Whoever knows Sardou, whoever has listened to this inexhaustible and learned conversationalist, and—this above all—whoever has assisted at one of his readings, where, Proteus-like, he is the living incarnation of every one of his characters, from an emperor down to the rough laborer, from an innocent girl down to the courtesan; whoever has seen him under fire, leading the battle with magnificent strategy to gain it for his soldiers, or has seen him on the stage, giving, unaided, the living, breathing examples of the passions he has unchained, being, by turn, ironical or tearful, cruel or supplicating, tender or implacable—whoever has seen this is seized with the idea that Sardou's work is made after his own image, the dominant tone of which is action. We adduce "*Theodora*" and "*Fedora*" in support of our statement. Sardou alone, in all the world, has been able to plant us in the tangible, real, living Bizantium of the ancient empire. Shakespeare, to whom we must always look, when he wished to convey the idea of the Roman people, began his *Julius Cesar* with a trivial conversation amongst carpenters and cobblers, very truthfully supposing that in all ages humanity has always been identical with itself. Keeping this in view, Sardou in his "*Theodora*" has breathed life into the nostrils of beings of flesh and blood, and has not given us mere abstractions of purely conventional tragedy. And what success, what triumph !

Sardou sees, looks for and finds everywhere the type of woman he needs. Until he eclipses himself "*Theodora*" and "*Fedora*" must remain the most deeply studied and accurately defined of his creations.

ACTE PREMIER.

Nous nous trouvons, au premier acte, à Saint-Pétersbourg, dans le cabinet de travail du Capitaine Vladimir Yariskine, fils du nouveau préfet de police de Saint-Pétersbourg.

Nous voyons, au lever du rideau, le valet de chambre du Capitaine Vladimir, un français nommé Désiré, très dévoué à son maître ; il est en conférence avec un bijoutier de Saint-Petersbourg, Maître Echileff. Celui-ci a entendu parler d'un futur mariage entre le Capitaine Vladimir et une grand dame dont on ne dit pas encore le nom dans les cercles de la haute société russe ; aussi, le bijoutier est-il à pour attendre le maître de la maison et lui offrir ses services pour les cadeaux précieux à mettre dans la corbeille de mariage. Mais Vladimir ne rentre pas, et les heures s'écoulent pendant que Désiré et Echileff parlent familièrement de la fiancée inconnue, de son énorme fortune et de celle, non moins grande, de Vladimir. La conversation s'étend sur tout ce qui se passe en Russie, sur la situation politique, les dangereux exploits des nihilistes et les craintes qu'inspirent au peuple et aux négociants les menaces de ces conspirateurs qui ne reculent devant rien et qui ont déjà, tout récemment, fait sauter le Czar Alexandre II.

Vladimir est, d'après l'avis général, plus menacé que quiconque puisqu'il est le fils du Préfet de Police ; mais il est jeune, fort, riche et beau, et de taille à se défendre.

Le bijoutier Echileff, qui craint la concurrence des bijoutiers juifs au sujet des fournitures à faire à Vladimir à l'occasion de son magnifique mariage, essaie de mettre le valet de chambre Désiré dans ses intérêts, en lui offrant des cadeaux personnels.

Cependant, l'heure continue à marcher, et Désiré commence à être inquiet de l'absence de son maître, qui avait coutume depuis quelque temps de rentrer de meilleure heure, quand on annonce la Princesse.

La Princesse c'est Fédora, Princesse Romazoff, veuve, fiancée de Vladimir. Pourquoi vient-elle chez lui à pareille heure ? Désiré fait disparaître le bijoutier et introduit Fédora, qui entre avec Dimitri, le groom du capitaine.

— Où est Vladimir ? s'écrie-t-elle. — Car elle aussi est inquiète, très inquiète. Les bruits politiques sont loin d'être rassurants ; elle attendait son fiancé dans sa loge, au théâtre, et, ne l'ayant pas vu de toute la soirée, elle n'a pu y tenir et est accourue pour voir s'il n'avait pas été victime d'un accident.

Ni Désiré ni Dimitri ne peuvent la renseigner. Le jeune capitaine est sorti, à son heure habituelle, avec quelques amis pour aller dîner au restaurant Borrel. De là, il devait aller au Théâtre Michel ; il a dû oublier qu'il avait donné rendez-vous au bijoutier, et il est probable qu'il sera allé à son cercle. Fédora, qui se meurt d'angoisse et d'impatience, envoie au cercle ; mais on n'y a pas vu le capitaine. . . .

En attendant, le temps s'écoule et l'on ne sait plus que penser. Fédora, frémissante, ne tarit pas en questions à Désiré, s'informe des moindres détails du départ de Vladimir, envoie chez ses amis, partout ; mais personne n'a de nouvelles.

Enfin, on se met à espérer qu'il est allé, par ordre, chez son père, le préfet de police, qui est en ce moment hors de Saint-Pétersbourg, à Gatchina, auprès de l'Empereur.

Soudain, un grand bruit retentit, Fédora pousse un cri de joie : c'est la voiture

ACT FIRST.

The curtain rises on the study of Captain Vladimir Jariskine, son of the new Prefect of Police at St. Petersburg. The Captains valet, a Frenchman named Désiré, devoted to his master, is in conference with a Jeweller of St. Petersburg, Eschileff by name, who, having heard of a future marriage between Captain Vladimir and a lady of the highest social position in Russia, whose name is not yet known, has come to wait for the master of the house in order to offer his services for the manufacture of the costly bridal gifts. But Vladimir does not come in. The time goes by whilst Désiré and Eschileff chat familiarly about the unknown *fiancée* and of her enormous fortune which equals that of Vladimir. The conversation rolls on everything Russian, the political situation, the dangerous exploits of the nihilists, the fear which the menaces of these conspirators inspire in the people and among businessmen, and of the late successful attempt to blow up the Czar, Alexander II.

Vladimir is, according to general opinion, more in danger than any one else, since he is the son of the Prefect of Police, but he is young, strong, rich and handsome and perfectly able to take care of himself.

The Jeweller Eschileff, who fears the competition of the Jews in the furnishing of the marriage presents for Vladimir on the occasion of his sumptuous marriage, tries to win the valet Désiré over to his side by offering him presents.

Time flies, and Désiré commences to be anxious about his masters' continued absence, especially as the latter has taken the habit of late of coming home early when the Princess is announced.

The Princess is Fedora, Princess Romagoff, a widow and betrothed to Vladimir. But why does she come to see him at such an hour?

Désiré pushes the jeweller out and shows in Fedora, who enters followed by Dimitri, the captain's groom.

"Where is Vladimir?" she cries,—for she too, is anxious, very anxious. The flying political rumors are far from being reassuring. She had been waiting for him all the evening in her box at the opera. He had not come and her anxiety becoming unbearable, she has hastened to his rooms to see whether he has not become the victim of some accident.

Neither Désiré nor Dimitri are able to reassure her. The young captain had gone out at his usual hour with some of his friends to dine at Boirel's. Thence he was to go to the opera. He had probably forgotten that he had made an appointment with the jeweller and possibly had gone to his club. Fedora who is trembling with fear and anxiety sends immediately to the club. The captain has not been there— — —

An hour passes and an undefined fear grows in every one's heart. Fedora is half mad with anxiety and plies Désiré with questions as to the exact time the captain went out, where he was going and what he said; she sends to all his friends everywhere, but no one has seen Vladimir. Lastly they all commence to hope that he has gone by order of his father, the Prefect of Police, to meet the latter at Gatchina at the Emperor's residence.

Suddenly a noise is heard. Fedora utters a cry of joy. It is Vladimir's carriage. The terrible presentiments of the evening vanish! He is coming home! He is here!

de Vladimir que rentre ! . . . Les pressentiments terribles qu'elle avait depuis le commencement de la soirée s'évanouissent ; il rentre enfin, elle va le voir !

Hélas ! Ce n'est pas Vladimir qu'elle voit apparaître. C'est un officier de police qui fait son entrée, suivi de deux de ses agents et d'un gentleman, M. de Siriex, secrétaire de l'ambassade de France.

Ils annoncent qu'ils ramènent Vladimir très dangereusement blessé et qu'ils ont mandé des médecins en toute hâte, car le cas est grave. Ils s'informent de la personnalité de Fédora et prennent des précautions avant de lui apprendre la fatale vérité ; on a transporté le blessé dans sa chambre, qui est au fond de la scène, mais on n'en laisse approcher personne.

Les médecins arrivent ; au milieu des anxiétés de Fédora et sous l'œil de l'officier de police, ils examinent la blessure, reconnaissent qu'elle provient d'une balle de revolver et déclarent la situation extrêmement grave. Ils interdisent à tout le monde l'accès de la chambre, envoient quérir leurs troussees et des remèdes et s'enferment avec le blessé.

Restée seule avec les hommes de police et les deux serviteurs Désiré et Dimitri, Fédora fait commencer l'enquête sur le crime.

M. de Siriex et le cocher de Vladimir sont d'accord sur leurs déclarations, mais ils ne savent pas grand' chose qui puisse éclairer les magistrats. Vladimir s'est fait conduire dans un quartier éloigné et est descendu dans une maison isolée au-milieu de vastes jardins abandonnés, où se trouvait établi un tir. On ignore à qui appartient la maison ; elle a été louée par une femme inconnue, assez âgée. A peine Vladimir est-il entré seul dans cette maison, que deux coups de feu se sont fait entendre ; deux coups tellement rapprochés que le cocher a même cru, tout d'abord, qu'il n'y en avait eu qu'un. Au même instant, un homme, qu'on n'a pas reconnu, est sorti de la maison et a pu disparaître rapidement en déjouant toutes les poursuites.

Evidemment, cela ne suffit pas pour faire avancer l'enquête ; les preuves manquent, et on en est réduit à des conjectures. Tout ce qui semble être absolument clair à tout le monde, c'est que le crime a été commis par les nihilistes, par vengeance politique.

Mais voilà que, tout à coup, un incident nouveau vient jeter un peu de lumière sur tout ce mystère. Un domestique se rappelle qu'une femme âgée est venue apporter une lettre à Vladimir, avant l'heure du dîner, et positivement Vladimir a mis cette lettre dans le tiroir de sa table à écrire. Sûrement, cette lettre donnait un rendez-vous au capitaine, et ce rendez-vous était celui du guet à pens où on l'attendait et où il a succombé.

Mais c'est en vain qu'on fouille dans le tiroir, la lettre n'y est plus.

Comment a-t-elle disparu ? Qui l'a volée ? Certainement le capitaine ne l'a pas reprise : il s'est levé et est sorti en voiture aussitôt après l'avoir jetée dans le tiroir.

— Toute cette enquête, parfois interrompue par les allées et venues des médecins et de ceux qui les servent, est aussi saisissante que terrible par le naturel émouvant de la mise en scène. — Le capitaine meurt sans pouvoir prononcer une parole, au milieu des pleurs déchirants et du désespoir profond de sa fiancée, des regrets de ses domestiques et de la profonde émotion de tous les assistants, M. de Siriex et les hommes de police.

On croirait alors qu'il n'y a plus qu'à en rester là et à attendre que la justice suive son cours, en recherchant l'homme qu'on a vu s'enfuir de la petite maison du tir au pistolet et la vieille femme qui a loué cette maison et qui est probablement la même qui a apporté une lettre au capitaine. . . .

Mais alors, sous de pressantes interrogations du chef de police, un domestique se souvient tout à coup d'un événement que, dans son trouble, il avait complètement

— — — Alas! it is not Vladimir she sees enter. It is a police officer who appears followed by two of his subordinates and by a gentleman, M. de Siriex, secretary of the French legation. They announce that they are bringing Vladimir home dangerously wounded, and that they have sent in all haste for the first physicians in the city, as the case is serious. They inquire as to who Fedora is, and take great precautions in breaking the terrible news to her. They have transported the wounded man to his room which is at centre of stage back, but no one is allowed to approach.

The doctors arrive, in the midst of great excitement on Fedora's part, and under the supervision of the officer the wound is examined and is recognized as being the result of a pistol shot. The situation is declared serious. The doctors shut everybody out of the room, send for their instruments and medicine and lock themselves in with the patient.

Left alone with the policemen, Désiré and Dimitri, Fedora forces them to begin an inquiry into the crime.

M. de Siriex and Vladimir's coachman agree in declaring that they know little to enlighten justice. Vladimir had ordered himself driven to a far off quarter and had alighted before the door of a house surrounded by vast but deserted gardens wherein was situated a shooting-gallery. They neither of them know to whom the house belongs. It is let by an unknown woman past middle age. Hardly had Vladimir gone into this house, alone, when two shots were heard, so near together that the coachman first thought that there was but one. At the same instant a man who was not recognized left the house hurriedly and had been able to baffle all pursuit.

Evidently, this is not enough to help along the search. Proof is wanting and they are reduced to conjectures. What seems, however, perfectly clear to every one is, that the crime was committed by the nihilists for political revenge.

But suddenly an incident happens which throws some light on all this mystery. One of the servants remembers that a woman past middle age came to bring a letter for Vladimir before dinner and that Vladimir positively put this letter in the drawer of his study-table. This letter must certainly have appointed a meeting-place and this rendez-vous proved to be the ambush where he met his death.

In vain they search the drawer. The letter is not there.

How has it disappeared? Who has stolen it? Certainly the captain did not take it out of the drawer again. He rose from his chair, went out and was driven away in his carriage immediately after having thrown it into the drawer.

All this inquiry, occasionally interrupted by the coming and going of the doctors and their assistants, is as striking as it is terrible on account of the natural emotion of all concern.

The captain dies without being able to speak a word in the midst of sobs, and the heart-rending despair of his *fiancée*, the regret of his servants and the profound emotion of all present including M. de Siriex and the police.

It was thought that the affair would have to stop here, to allow justice to follow its course by hunting out the man who escaped through the shooting-gallery and the woman who had hired the house and who was probably the person who had brought the letter to the captain.

But under the close questioning of the chief of police a servant suddenly remembers an event which, in his excitement, he had completely forgotten. He tells how, after the departure of his master, a young man called and asked for Vladimir; that he went into the study and, saying that he was one of Vladimir's friends, was about to leave him a note, that he approached the writing table, but suddenly changed his

oublié. Il raconte que, après le départ de son maître, un jeune homme s'est présenté pour lui parler; qu'il est entré dans ce cabinet de travail et que, affirmant être l'ami de Vladimir, il a désiré lui laisser un mot d'écrit; qu'il s'est approché de la table à écrire, mais qu'il s'est aussitôt ravisé en disant: "Bon! c'est inutile; je lui dirai moi-même de vive voix ce qui m'amenait." Et il est alors reparti. — Sûrement, cet inconnu est le voleur de la lettre de la vieille femme.

Mais quel est cet inconnu? — Le jeune domestique, pressé de questions, se rappelle l'avoir déjà vu une fois, mais il ne se souvient pas de son nom.

Tout le monde se met alors à l'aider dans ses souvenirs, et, chacun lui disant les divers noms des hommes qui ont pu, depuis quelque temps, se présenter à l'hôtel de Vladimir, il finit par déclarer que ce visiteur de la nuit s'appelle Loris Ipanoff.

Loris Ipanoff! — Mais c'est un jeune seigneur extrêmement riche, dont personne n'a jamais rien dit. Il est vrai que le vol n'a pas été le mobile de l'assassinat, mais il peut y avoir mille autres raisons. Il ne connaît pas la Princesse Fédora, la fiancée de Vladimir, ce n'est donc pas non plus une vengeance d'amoureux; mais enfin, il n'y a pas de doutes à avoir. C'est lui qui a volé la lettre, c'est lui qui a tué l'infortuné capitaine.

Loris Ipanoff n'était pas l'ami de Vladimir; ils ne vivaient pas dans le même monde, ils ne fréquentaient pas la même société. Vladimir était un viveur, un gentilhomme de bruit et de tapage, tandis que Loris Ipanoff passe pour être un jeune seigneur sage, sérieux et travailleur; mais qu'importe? C'est même une raison, une preuve de plus. Loris Ipanoff est un nihiliste; il a servi d'instrument à ces conspirateurs qui essaient sans cesse de soulever la Russie. Il est très riche, mais les nihilistes comptent dans leurs rangs de grands noms et de grandes fortunes. D'après une phrase célèbre, citée d'ailleurs dans la première scène de cet acte entre Désiré et Echileff: "Il y a des nihilistes même à la table du Czar."

On se souvient aussi, à ce moment, d'une lettre adressée il y a huit jours à Vladimir, dont le père venait d'être nommé préfet de police et se signalait déjà par des mesures de rigueur. Cette lettre, comme le dit Désiré, était ainsi conçue: "Si votre père continue à nous persécuter de la sorte, il prépare pour vous une mort violente."

Plus de doute! Le crime est l'œuvre des nihilistes; Loris Ipanoff est nihiliste, et c'est lui qui est l'assassin du capitaine.

Fédora, dont la mort de son fiancé, loin d'abattre son courage, a surexcité au plus haut point le désespoir amoureux et le désir acharné de vengeance, bouillit de colère et de joie en pensant que le crime ne va pas rester impuni; elle fait passer dans l'âme de tous ceux qui l'entourent sa fièvre et son indignation, et c'est à qui, sous son inspiration, ira le premier arrêter le criminel.

Loris Ipanoff habite précisément en face de la maison de Vladimir, au second étage; on y court, tandis que quelques-uns retiennent Fédora qui voudrait aller l'arrêter elle-même et peut-être se venger de ses propres mains.

Anxieuse, regardant à la fenêtre qui donne sur celles de Loris, elle attend! . .

Mais les hommes de police ne trouvent pas Loris chez lui; il vient de s'échapper. . . . Il avait donc prévu son arrestation. . . . C'était donc bien lui l'assassin! Et Fédora, désespérée, folle, ne se connaissant plus, va se jeter au cou de Vladimir, embrassant avec fureur son cadavre et s'abîmant dans son immense douleur.

mind saying: "After all, it is hardly necessary, I will tell him myself what brought me." He then left. This unknown individual was certainly the thief of the letter that the old woman had brought. Who was this young man? The servant, plied with questions, remembers having seen him once before, but does not remember his name.

Each one suggests every name he can think of and in his way all the names are passed in review of the men who are in the habit of calling at Vladimir's residence. The servant finally declares that the visitor in question is Loris Ipanoff.

Loris Ipanoff! Can this be? The gentleman in question is a nobleman extremely rich, of whom no one has ever breathed anything wrong. It is true that theft was not the motive of the assassination, but there might have been a thousand other motives. He does not know the Princess Fedora, Vladimir's *fiancée*; therefore jealousy is not the cause, but the deduction is irresistible: he stole the letter, he must have shot the unfortunate captain.

Loris Ipanoff was not an intimate friend of Vladimir's; they did not live in the same world, nor did they frequent the same society. Vladimir was a man about town, a high liver and rather ostentatious in his habits, whilst Loris Ipanoff was known as a young man of serious disposition and as a hard worker in literary pursuits. But what does this matter? It is even a further proof. Loris Ipanoff is a nihilist; he has served as a tool in the hands of those conspirators who are ceaselessly trying to excite revolt in Russia. He is very rich, but the nihilists count in their ranks both great names and great fortunes. According to the notable sentence cited in the first scene between Désiré and Eschileff: "There are nihilists even at the table of the Czar!"

It was remembered by several present that a week before Vladimir, whose father had just been appointed Prefect of Police, had received a letter referring to the strict measures adopted by the police. This letter, as Désiré testified, ran as follows: "If your father continues persecution of this description he will prepare for you a violent death!" Not an atom of doubt! The crime is the work of nihilists: Loris Ipanoff is a nihilist. He is without doubt the assassin.

Fedora whom the death of her lover has not only not discouraged, but in whom despair has lighted a passionate desire for revenge, first thrills with hatred, then starts with joy to think that at least this great crime will not go unpunished.

Her feverish indignation is communicated to all present, and each one is more eager than his neighbor to be the first to cause the arrest of the criminal.

Loris Ipanoff lives exactly opposite Vladimir's residence and occupies the whole second floor of the house. All make a dash across the street, except a few who restrain Fedora, who asks nothing better than to make the arrest herself and perhaps avenge her lover with her own hands.

Anxious, breathless, she gazes out of the window, which faces Loris' apartments and awaits the result.

The police find that Loris is not at home; he has fled! He foresaw then his arrest. It is he! He is the assassin!

And Fedora, mad with despair, no longer able to restrain herself, throws herself on Vladimir's body, kisses his cold face and faints.

CURTAIN.

ACTE DEUXIEME.

L'action se passe maintenant à Paris, fort peu de temps après ces terribles événements qui ont fait tant de sensation à Saint-Petersbourg. La Russie est toujours dans la même situation ; en proie aux machinations des nihilistes et surtout à la terreur qu'elles lui inspirent, le gouvernement du Czar se voit forcé, pour essayer d'assurer la sécurité de son Empire trop vaste, d'envoyer et d'entretenir partout des espions qui le renseignent et qui, au besoin, se font les instruments des vengeances privées, sans reculer devant des actes que ne permet la justice d'aucun pays. Pour les délits et même les crimes politiques, toutes les nations accordent le droit d'asile aux étrangers ; aussi, les sicaires de la police russe sont-ils forcés quelquefois, en France, en Suisse, en Allemagne, de recourir au rapt, à l'enlèvement, même à l'assassinat des nihilistes, contre lesquels aucun pays civilisé n'accorderait l'extradition.

Cette courte explication est nécessaire avant d'aller plus loin dans l'exposé de cette pièce, qui est le chef d'œuvre de Sardou dans le genre du drame moderne.

C'est, en effet, chez une nihiliste que nous nous trouvons, à cette heure, à Paris. Une nihiliste ardente et convaincue, cette Comtesse Olga Soukaroff qui a une immense fortune, qui possède un hôtel luxueux à Paris, et qui y reçoit tous les Russes rebelles ou mécontents, tous les condamnés, les échappés des mines et des bagnes de Sibérie, en un mot tous les hommes politiques vaineux qui rêvent l'affranchissement de leurs concitoyens et la liberté de leur patrie.

Au lever du rideau, nous nous trouvons donc chez la Comtesse Olga Soukaroff, et nous y retrouvons Rouvel et l'ancien attaché de l'ambassade de France à Saint-Petersbourg, M. de Siriex.

Siriex raconte qu'il a quitté son poste pour rentrer à Paris comme Secrétaire du Ministre des Affaires étrangères. Depuis trois mois qu'il a quitté la Russie, il est sans nouvelles ni renseignements, et il en demande. Rouvel lui répond, et la conversation tombe sur la Comtesse Olga Soukaroff, sur ce qu'elle fait et sur le monde qu'elle reçoit.

La comtesse passe pour être une blasée, qui recherche dans l'excentricité et la politique des plaisirs et des sensations qu'elle ne trouvait pas ailleurs. En ce moment, elle est notamment occupée de lancer et de présenter aux Parisiens un jeune pianiste de génie, un nihiliste. Elle se prend au sérieux comme femme politique, mais ce ne peut être bien réel, d'après ce que dit Rouvel. C'est une femme charmante, un peu toquée, et voilà tout. Pour le moment, sa maison est très agréable, elle reçoit brillamment tous les mercredis, et sa passion actuelle est le pianiste en question, le malheureux proscrit Boleslas Lasinski, nihiliste et polonais.

Quand la Comtesse Olga entre en scène, elle se réjouit de revoir sa vieille et bonne connaissance M. de Siriex, et la conversation devient tout d'abord plus intéressante, puisque l'on va y apprendre des nouvelles de Fédora, aussitôt après qu'Olga aura fait la présentation et le magnifique panégyrique de son pianiste adoré.

Loris Ipanoff, qui se trouve à Paris et qui est le cousin de la Comtesse Olga, ne manque aucune des réceptions de son aimable cousine. Il s'y trouve donc, ce soir-là. A son nom, M. de Siriex s'étonne et demande si c'est bien le Loris Ipanoff qui a été accusé du meurtre commis à Saint-Petersbourg sur le fiancé de Fédora.

ACT SECOND.

The scene is now changed to Paris, a short time after the terrible events which have made such a sensation at St. Petersburg. Russia is still a prey to the machinations of the nihilists, and especially to the terror which they inspire. The Czar's government, trying to insure the security of this most unwieldy empire sees itself forced to send out and support everywhere, spies, who keep it posted and who, in case of need, become the instruments of private revenge, and who do not hesitate to commit acts contrary to the law of any country. For political misdemeanors and even crimes, all nations accord a right of asylum to foreigners; therefore the Russian agents are sometimes forced in France, Switzerland and Germany to have recourse to abduction, to secret seizure and even to the assassination of nihilists, as no civilized country would accede to a demand for their extradition.

This short explanation is necessary before going further into the plot of this play which is Sardou's master-piece in the style of the modern drama.

It is in fact at the house of a nihilist in Paris that the scene is now laid. The Countess Olga Soukaroff is an ardent and sincere nihilist who has an immense fortune, possesses a luxuriant residence in Paris, and who receives therein all the Russian rebels and malcontents, all convicts escaped from the mines and prisons of Siberia—in a word, all the political schemers who dream of enfranchisement of their fellow-citizens and the liberty of their country.

The rising of the curtain discloses the Countess Olga's apartments, M. Rouvel and the former attaché of the French Legation at St. Petersburg, M. de Siriex. Siriex tells how he has left his former post to return to Paris as secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

During the three months that have passed since he left Russia he is without news or information of any sort and he questions Rouvel closely. The conversation turns on the Countess Olga Soukaroff, on what she is doing and the people she receives. The Countess passes for a woman of the world worn out with its pleasures, who seeks in eccentricities of all sorts and in politics the pleasures and sensations that she would not find otherwise. At the present moment she is notably occupied in introducing to the Parisians a young pianist of genius, a nihilist and a Pole. She really believes herself to be a factor in politics but she is not very redoubtable Rouvel tells him. She is a charming woman, a little odd and that is all. For the rest, the house is a very agreeable one, she receives brilliantly every Wednesday and her passion is for the present the poor, proscribed pianist.

Boleslas Lasinski, nihilist and a Pole.

The Countess enters and is happy to see again her old and good friend M. de Siriex, and after having introduced and eulogized her favorite pianist, the conversation turns on Fedora.

Loris Ipanoff, who is in Paris and who is cousin of the Countess Olga, never misses a single reception of his charming cousin. He therefore is here this evening.

At the mention of his name, M. de Siriex in astonishment asks if it is possible that it is the same Loris Ipanoff who has been accused of the murder of Fedora's fiancée at St. Petersburg.

Mais personne ne sait ce que veut dire Siriex, et c'est avec un ensemble complet qu'Olga, Rouvel et autres lui disent que Loris Ipanoff est le plus charmant homme qu'il y ait au monde.

La Comtesse Olga raconte alors une charmante excursion qu'elle a faite, la veille, sur la Seine, de Paris à Maisons-Laffitte, sur le yacht de la Princesse Fédora.

On dit à Siriex que, en effet, la Princesse Fédora est à Paris, qu'elle a quitté Saint Pétersbourg depuis deux mois, et Loris confirme cette nouvelle. Siriex tombe d'étonnements en étonnements en voyant que Loris parle de Fédora aussi tranquillement que si rien ne s'était passé, et en apprenant que Fédora se trouve en France par ordre du gouvernement russe avec lequel elle est au plus mal.

La stupéfaction de Siriex redouble en apprenant que Loris faisait partie de l'excursion de la veille, sur le yacht de Fédora, et que cette dernière n'a jamais parlé à son amie Olga du malheur qui lui était si récemment arrivé en Russie, la mort de son fiancé. Il est vrai que rien n'est étonnant dans la conduite mystérieuse d'une femme comme Fédora, car elle descend en droite ligue des Cantacuzène, ces terribles empires d'orient qui régnèrent si longtemps à Constantinople. Elle porte même à son doigt leur anneau impérial, et elle a parfois la cruauté de ses ancêtres ; la veille encore, pendant l'excursion sur la Seine à bord de son yacht, elle a fait jeter à l'eau un matelot qui lui avait désobéi.

Siriex, pour avoir le cœur net de tout ce mystère qui l'environne, critique un peu Fédora et sa conduite, met en doute la sincérité de ses actes et nie qu'elle soit une nihiliste expulsée de Russie. Loris défend chaudement Fédora et ne paraît nullement ému quand Siriex, à bout d'arguments, met enfin la conversation sur l'assassinat de Vladimir Yariskine.

Siriex s'avoue que toute sa diplomatie est battue par l'habileté des gens qui l'entourent, et il se promet d'essayer enfin de savoir la vérité auprès de la Princesse Fédora elle-même, dont on annonce la prochaine arrivée à la soirée d'Olga.

Après quelques théories de cette dernière sur le charme qu'il y a à aimer un conspirateur, un criminel politique, comme l'est son pianiste Boleslas, en se disant toujours qu'une fête si chère peut tomber le lendemain, la Princesse Fédora fait son entrée dans les salons de la Comtesse.

Dès qu'elle peut se débarrasser les autres personnages, Fédora se trouve seule avec Siriex.

Elle lui confesse qu'elle poursuit toujours sa vengeance, qu'elle n'est à Paris que dans ce but, qu'elle a des hommes de la police russe à ses ordres, et qu'elle est toujours convaincue que c'est Loris qui a tué Vladimir. Il ne le lui a pas dit, cependant ; mais tout le fait supposer. Quant à elle, elle n'a rien dit : c'est en n'éveillant aucun soupçon sur ses intentions qu'elle pourra arriver à venger son fiancé. Leurs projets de mariage n'étaient pas encore publics ; aussi, quand, après son crime, Loris a réussi à quitter la Russie sans délai en dépistant toutes les poursuites, il ne savait rien concernant Fédora et Vladimir ; rien donc ne devait lui faire prendre garde à elle. Ils ont ainsi pu faire connaissance, et leur intimité a promptement marché.

C'est à ce point que Loris est devenu profondément amoureux de Fédora, qu'il croit proscrite et persécutée comme lui-même. Il est très riche, elle aussi ; par conséquent il est sincère. Fédora n'attend plus qu'une occasion très prochaine pour profiter de cet amour et lui faire confesser son crime. S'il ne l'a pas commis, elle le quittera et l'oubliera pour aller sur une autre piste, car elle ne saurait jamais renoncer à venger Vladimir. S'il est coupable, elle le livrera sans pitié.

Mais le temps et le charme de Loris ont déjà commencé leur œuvre ; Fédora se plait parfois à douter de la culpabilité de ce jeune homme, quoiqu'elle soit pour elle

But nobody knows what M. de Siriex refers to and it is the universal opinion, expressed by Olga, Rouvel and the others that Loris Ipanoff is the most charming man in the world.

The Countess Olga then tell of a charming excursion she has made the day before on the Seine from Paris to Maisons Lafitte upon Fedora's yacht. In fact they tell Siriex that Fedora has left St. Petersburg two months before and Loris confirms this news. Siriex is more and more astonished hearing Loris speak of Fedora as quietly as if nothing had occurred, and on learning that Fedora is in Paris by the order of the Russian Government with which she is on bad terms.

The stupefaction of Siriex is redoubled, however, when he learns that Loris has been one of the party of the day before on Fedora's yacht, and that the latter has never spoken to her friend Olga of the sorrow that has so lately befallen her in Russia, the death of her fiancée.

It is true that there is nothing astonishing in the mysterious conduct of a woman like Fedora, for she is a direct descendent of the Cautacuzènes, those terrible emperors of the Orient who reigned so long at Constantinople. She even wears on her finger their imperial ring and she has sometimes the barbarity of her ancestors. During the excursion on the Seine the day before, while on her yacht, she had had a sailor thrown overboard for having disobeyed her.

Siriex, to get at the bottom of all this mystery, criticises Fedora and her conduct, throws doubt upon the sincerity of her acts and denies that she can be a nihilist expelled from Russia. Loris warmly defends Fedora and does not seem in the least moved, when for want of an argument Siriex finally turns the conversation upon the assassination of Vladimir Yariskine.

Siriex acknowledges to himself that all his diplomacy is set at naught by the skill of those around him, and he promises himself to get the truth of the matter from the Princess Fedora herself whose arrival is momentarily expected.

Several theories are put forward by the Countess Olga concerning the peculiar charm that lies in loving a conspirator, a political criminal like her dear pianist Boleslas, in being convinced of his hourly peril and in knowing that to-morrow may bring about his death. Thereupon Fedora enters.

As soon as she can rid herself of the rest of the party, Fedora finds herself alone with Siriex.

She confesses to him that she is still following out her vengeance, that she is in Paris only for this end, that she has Russian police agents at her command and that she is thoroughly convinced that it is Loris who killed Vladimir. He has not acknowledged it, however, but everything makes her suppose it. As for herself, she has said nothing. It is only by lulling to sleep every suspicion of her intentions that she can expect to succeed in avenging her *fiancée*. Their intended marriage had not been made public and when, after his crime, Loris had succeeded in immediately leaving Russia, foiling all pursuit, he knew nothing concerning Fedora and Vladimir, there was nothing therefore to put him on his guard against her. They had therefore been able to make each others acquaintance, and intimacy had thriven apace.

Loris now falls deeply in love with Fedora, whom he imagines exiled and persecuted like himself. He is very rich, as well as she, consequently he is sincere.

Fedora only waits for an occasion, in order to take advantage of this love and make him confess his crime. If he has not committed it, she will leave him and forget him to follow up another clue, for she will never renounce the avenging of Vladimir. If he is guilty she will inexorably give him up to justice.

But time and the charm of Loris have already begun their work ; Fedora from

bien avérée, et elle avoue sincèrement à Siriex qu'elle préférerait trouver Loris innocent !

Après cette scène, écrite et pensée de main de maître par le grand auteur français, comme elle est si incomparablement rendue par l'illustre actrice qui l'a créée, Loris rentre et se trouve enfin, dans les salons d'Olga, en tête-à-tête avec la Princesse Fédora.

Cet entretien, une des plus émouvantes pages du théâtre contemporain, arrive aux plus hauts degrés qu'aient jamais pu atteindre l'émotion et l'intérêt dramatique.

Fédora dit à Loris qu'elle ne l'attendait par ce soir-là, et elle se laisse aller à lui parler d'amour et à lui permettre de lui en parler aussi. Tantôt sincère et passionnée dans ce qu'elle dit elle-même, tantôt réagissant contre sa secrète sympathie et tendant des pièges à son amoureux, elle finit par croire à son innocence et elle lui annonce qu'elle va repartir pour la Russie dès le lendemain, car elle a reçu du Czar sa grâce pleine et entière.

— Venez avec moi ? lui dit-elle ; le Czar vous pardonnera aussi. — Vous n'avez pas du commettre de grands crimes ; j'intercéderai pour vous.

Mais Loris ne peut pas, ne veut pas. Il sait qu'on ne lui accordera pas sa grâce, car on l'accuse d'avoir assassiné le fils du préfet de police, Vladimir Yariskine. Son père est très vindicatif et ne croira jamais à son innocence.

— Mais vous la prouvez, nous la prouverons, s'écrie Fédora.

— Et si je ne puis pas la prouver ?

— Comment ?

— Fédora, m'aimez-vous ?

— Eh bien oui, je vous aime !

— Vous m'aimez ? . . . Vous ? . . . Eh bien, alors, je puis tout vous dire . . . C'est moi qui ai tué Vladimir !

A cette épouvantable révélation, Fédora, sa ressouvenant de ses serments et de la mission qu'elle s'est imposée, ne pense plus soudain qu'à venger son fiancé . . . Mais comment faire ? Livrer Loris aux agents du Czar ; mais de quelle manière ? . . . Ce n'est que par l'amour qu'elle peut attirer le meurtrier dans un guet à pens . . . Aussi, ne veut-elle pas ici entendre la justification, les explications de Loris ; il les lui promet pour le lendemain, mais elle les veut plus tôt ; il lui faut la vengeance immédiate, le lendemain est trop éloigné pour elle.

Elle l'attendra, cette nuit même, chez elle ; elle lui donne les moyens de pénétrer dans sa maison . . . Puisqu'elle l'aime, qu'a-t-il à craindre ? Qu'il ne s'arrête ni devant les dangers qu'il peut courir, ni devant le respect qu'il lui doit ; elle l'aime ! Pourrait-il hésiter ?

Devant d'aussi brûlantes paroles, Loris n'hésite point, en effet. Il ira, cette nuit même, chez Fédora . . .

Et Fédora sera vengée ! . . .

RIDEAU.

time to time allows herself to doubt his culpability, notwithstanding that it is very plain to her, and sincerely admits to Sirieux that she would prefer to find Loris innocent!

After this masterly scene, written and thought out by the great French author, and as it has been incomparably given by the illustrious actress who created the title rôle, Loris comes back and finds himself tête-à-tête with the Princess Fedora.

This interview is one of the most moving pages of the contemporaneous stage, and raises to the highest degree the dramatic interest and emotion of the spectator.

Fedora tells Loris that she did not expect to see him this evening and allows him to speak to her of love and permits herself to speak of love to him.

First, sincere and passionate in what she says herself, and again striving against her secret sympathy for him, she lays pitfall for her lover and finally ends by believing in his innocence, and tells him that she is about to leave for Russia to-morrow as she has received from the Czar a full and complete pardon. "Come with me!" she says, "the Czar will pardon you also; you certainly have committed no great crime. I will intercede for you."

But Loris cannot go, nor does he wish to. He knows that he will not be pardoned, because they accuse him of having assassinated Vladimir, the son of the Prefect of Police. The latter is very vindictive and would never believe in his innocence.

"But you will prove it, we will prove it together!" cries Fedora.

"And if I cannot prove it?"

"What!"

"Fedora, do you love me?"

"Yes! I love you!"

"You love me? You? . . . Well, then I can tell you everything . . . It is I who killed Vladimir!"

At this frightful revelation, Fedora remembers her vows and the mission she has given herself to fulfill. She returns to her ideas of revenge.

She will of course give up Loris to the agents of the Czar . . . But how? . . . It is only by love that she can draw the murderer into a trap. Neither does she wish to listen now to the explanations of Loris; he promises them to her on the morrow. She must have them sooner, she must have immediate revenge. To-morrow is too far off. She will expect him this very night at her house; she gives him a key . . . Since she loves him what has he to fear? He must not be deterred by the danger he may run nor by the respect which he owes her. She loves him! Why hesitate?

Before these burning words, Loris succumbs. He will go this very night.

He will meet her.

And Fedora will be avenged!

CURTAIN.

ACTE TROISIEME.

Après la soirée chez la comtesse Olga, l'action se passe chez Fédora, au bord de la Seine, dans son hôtel sur le quai, en face duquel se trouve amarré son yacht de plaisance dont il a déjà été question dans l'acte précédent.

Fédora, fiévreuse et triomphante à la fois, sent qu'elle tient enfin sa vengeance; elle ne la laissera pas échapper. Elle donne des ordres à ses domestiques et fait venir en toute hâte l'officier de la police russe que l'on a mis à sa disposition, ce même Gretch qui a mené, au premier acte, l'enquête sur l'assassinat de Vladimir.

En attendant Gretch, Fédora reçoit M. de Siriex, qui lui avait promis de passer avant de rentrer chez lui, pour savoir des nouvelles sur ce qu'elle a pu apprendre de la culpabilité de Loris.

Fédora lui annonce qu'elle a tout appris, puisque Loris lui a tout avoué. Elle n'en a pas encore les détails, mais elle va les avoir. C'est évidemment comme nihiliste que Loris a tué le fils du Préfet de Police, car il a prononcé devant elle le mot de *châtiment*.

Depuis quelque temps, le gouvernement russe demande au gouvernement français l'extradition de Loris, mais sans pouvoir l'obtenir; Fédora supplie M. de Siriex de s'employer à la faire accorder, et elle s'étonne des raisons que lui donne le Secrétaire du Ministre pour lui faire comprendre qu'aucune nation civilisée ne s'abaisserait au point de livrer un condamné politique.

Fédora agira donc seule. Il est fort tard, personne ne se promène à cette heure sur les quais; ses hommes de police saisiront Loris, le baïllonneront, le jetteront au fond du yacht qui est en face, sur la Seine, et Fédora le conduira elle-même dans la mer de la Manche, où elle le livrera, pieds et poings liés, à un vaisseau de guerre russe qui y est précisément en station.

C'est ce qu'elle explique tout au long au policier Gretch, dès que Siriex est sorti. Ou va laisser entrer Loris sans qu'il se doute de rien, mais on se jettera sur lui et on l'enlèvera aussitôt qu'il quittera la maison.

Gretch, de son côté, donne à Fédora les nouvelles de ce que lui et ses espions ont découvert dans la journée. Comme Loris s'est aperçu qu'on lui dérobait ou qu'on décachetait avant lui toutes les lettres qui lui étaient adressées de Russie, c'est maintenant par des personnes venant directement de Saint-Petersbourg qu'il les reçoit. Le jour même, il en a reçu une de son frère Valérien Ipanoff, capitaine dans la garde du Czar.

Plus de doutes, le frère est aussi un nihiliste. Fédora prend la plume et écrit au Préfet de Police qu'elle tient enfin Loris, qu'elle va le lui envoyer vivant, que son frère Valérien est son complice, et que, par conséquent, Vladimir va être vengé par son père et par sa fiancée.

Fédora fait mettre cette lettre à la poste et, ordonnant à ses gens d'aller dormir et aux agents de police de suivre ses instructions formelles, elle reste seule pour attendre Loris.

Elle va pouvoir savourer à son aise sa vengeance.

Loris se présente; comme toujours, il dit qu'il a été suivi par des espions; Fédora le rassure; en somme, pourquoi donc s'est-il fait nihiliste?

ACT THIRD.

After the Countess Olga's *soirée* the scene is changed to Fedora's residence on the banks of the Seine, opposite which rides at anchor the pretty little steam-yacht mentioned in the last act.

Fedora, feverish but triumphant, feels that she at last is about to reap her revenge. She will not let it escape! She gives orders to the servants and sends in haste for the Russian detective that the home government has placed at her disposal. It is the same Gretch who in the first act held the judicial inquiry upon the assassination of Vladimir.

While Fedora is waiting for the arrival of Gretch, M. de Siriex is announced and received by the mistress of the house. He had promised to call before going home and hear what she had discovered concerning the guilt of Loris.

Fedora tells him that she knows all, since Loris has confessed his crime to her. She has not yet heard all the details, but she is about to hear them. It is evidently as a nihilist that Loris did the foul deed, because he pronounced before her the word "retribution."

The Russian government has for some time been demanding the extradition of Loris Ipanoff from France, but without avail. Fedora begs M. de Siriex to use his influence to obtain it, and can not understand the reasons the Secretary of the Embassy gives in order to make her see that no civilized nation would stoop so low as to give up a man condemned for political reasons.

Fedora resolves in this case to act alone. It is very late and no one passes along the deserted streets. Her scheme is to have Loris seized by the detectives and his cries smothered with a cloak. He is then to be carried on board of her steam-yacht, which lies all prepared for the occasion; the yacht is then to steam immediately out to sea and shape its course for the English Channel, where a Russian man-of-war will be all ready to receive the prisoner. This is what she explains in detail to Gretch when M. de Siriex has taken his leave. Loris is to be allowed to enter the house, but is to be seized and pinioned the moment he leaves.

Gretch on his side gives Fedora an account of his labors during the day, and tells her what his spies have discovered.

As Loris has perceived that all the letters addressed to him from Russia are either stolen or read before their delivery, he now only receives direct communications from St. Petersburg through the hands of personal friends. This day he has received one from his brother, Valerian Ipanoff, captain of the Czar's body guard.

This settles another important question. The brother is also a nihilist. Fedora takes her pen and writes to the Prefect of Police at St. Petersburg that she at last holds Loris, that she will send him back to Russia alive, that his brother Valerian is his accomplice, and consequently Vladimir will at last be avenged by the hands of his father and by his *fiancée*.

Fedora sends this letter to be mailed, then orders the servants to bed and instructing the detectives to follow her commands to the letter, she is left alone and waits impatiently for Loris. She is at last able to count upon her revenge!... Loris at last appears. As usual, he complains of having been followed by spies.

A ces mots, Loris s'étonne; il n'est pas nihiliste, il ne l'a jamais été, il ne s'occupe pas de politique.

—Mais, dit Fédora incrédule, pourquoi avez-vous tué Vladimir Yariskine?

—Ce n'est pas comme nihiliste, s'écrie Loris; c'est parce qu'il m'avait pris ma femme!

—Votre femme?

—Oui, ma femme.

Et le jeune homme raconte alors ce qui s'est passé. Il vivait seul avec sa mère, à la campagne, dans un château; sa vieille et sainte mère avait une jeune lectrice, belle et spirituelle. Dans cette fréquentation de tous les instants, Loris était devenu amoureux de la demoiselle et avait voulu l'épouser.

Mais sa mère, qui avait du bon sens et jugeait autrement que lui les mérites et les qualités de la lectrice, avait refusé son consentement à une telle union et même ne avait congédié la jeune personne. Loris, désespéré et toujours plein d'amour, lui avait assigné un rendez-vous à Saint-Petersbourg, où ils s'étaient rejoints et mariés, en cachette, devant un prêtre, en espérant toujours que tôt ou tard la mère consentirait à ce mariage et que les deux époux devant Dieu pourraient enfin se proclamer tels devant le monde.

La jeune femme était coquette et semblait prêter un peu trop d'attention aux flatteries des hommes; une fois, Loris avait dû se présenter chez Vladimir, pour le prier de cesser ses assiduités et ses galanteries vis-à-vis de sa femme Vanda.

Les choses en étaient-là, et Loris n'avait aucun soupçon sur la conduite de sa femme, quand un jour, parti pour aller au château de sa mère, il ne put prendre le train et rentra chez lui. Il n'y trouva qu'une vieille domestique qui rapportait à sa maîtresse une lettre de Vladimir lui assignant un rendez-vous pour cette nuit. Cette lettre était une réponse à une autre de la femme de Loris qui prévenait Vladimir du départ de son mari.

Loris court chez Vladimir, ne l'y trouve pas, mais aperçoit dans un tiroir encore ouvert la lettre de sa femme: il s'en empare et court au rendez-vous des deux criminels.

Le rendez-vous avait lieu dans une maison isolée, louée pour Vladimir sous un faux nom. Loris s'y introduit, surprend les deux amants; un duel immédiat a lieu, Vladimir tire le premier et manque Loris, qui, tirant à son tour, blesse mortellement son adversaire.

Pendant ce temps, la femme coupable s'est enfuie, sans prendre ses vêtements de fourrure, et s'est réfugiée dans la maison d'une amie, où elle a trouvé la mort des suites du froid qu'elle a ressenti dans sa fuite précipitée.

Loris, lui aussi, est allé chercher un asile chez un de ses amis, nommé Boroff, qui lui a facilité les moyens de passer la frontière.—Ce Boroff, qui se trouvait hier encore à Paris chez la Comtesse Olga, vient justement de partir pour Ptersbourg pour dire toute la vérité à l'Empereur pour essayer d'obtenir la grâce de Loris. Mais il ne l'obtiendra certainement pas, tant que le Préfet de Police sera Yariskine, le père de Vladimir.

Fédora s'étonne de ce que la femme de Loris n'ait pas parlé avant de mourir. A quoi Loris explique qu'elle s'était tue par crainte d'être compromise et d'être envoyée en Sibérie.

Maintenant, comment a-t-on été tout de suite sur la vraie piste du meurtrier? Qui a été assez clairvoyant et assez méchant pour deviner que c'était Loris et pour mettre toute la police à ses trousses? Le jeune homme l'ignore.

Fedora assures him. "Why do you complain?" she says, "why, then, did you become a nihilist?" These words evidently astonish Loris. He is not a nihilist, he says, has never been one and does not deal in politics.

"But" Fedora exclaims incredulously, "why then did you shoot Vladimir Yariskine?"

"I did not kill him as a nihilist," interrupts Loris, "it was because he took my wife away from me!"

"Your wife?"

"Yes, my wife."

The young man then tells how the affair occurred. He was living alone with his mother at his country residence; his aged and beloved mother had a young companion handsome and *spirituelle*. By force of long association Loris fell in love with the lady and had asked her to marry him; but his mother, who was a very sensible woman and who had taken a different view of the merits and qualities of her companion, had refused her consent to the union and had even dismissed the young woman.

Loris, in despair and still deeply in love, had given her rendez-vous at St. Petersburg, where they met and were married in secret, hoping that, sooner or later, the mother would give her consent, and that the two who were married before God would soon be able to proclaim themselves husband and wife before the world.

The young wife was a decided coquette and seemed to lend a too willing ear to the flatteries of men. Once Loris had been forced to go to Vladimir and beg him to cease his attentions to his wife Vanda.

Matters stood thus and Loris had no suspicion concerning his wife's conduct, when one day, having started to catch a train, in order to pay a visit to his mother in the country, he misses the train and comes back home. He finds no one but an old servant, who is bringing back to her mistress a letter from Vladimir arranging a meeting for the same evening. This letter is an answer to one written by Loris' wife informing Vladimir of the departure of her husband. Loris rushes to Vladimir's house, does not find him in, but perceives in the drawer of his study table his wife's letter. He seizes it, reads its contents and flies to the place of rendez-vous.

This meeting had been appointed in an isolated house, rented by Vladimir under an assumed name. Loris forces his way in, surprises the delinquents, and the result is a duel upon the spot.

Vladimir fires first and misses Loris, who, firing in his turn, mortally wounds his adversary.

During this time the guilty wife escapes, without taking with her her heavy fur cloak. She seeks refuge in the house of a friend is taken ill with pneumonia caused by the exposure, and dies within a week.

For his own part, Loris sought refuge with a friend named Boroff, who found means to get him out of the country — This Boroff, who was yesterday still in Paris at the Countess Olga's, has just left for St. Petersburg to lay the whole truth before the Emperor and to try to obtain Loris's pardon. This he will certainly not do, as long as Yariskine, the father of Vladimir, is Prefect of Police.

Fedora is astonished that Loris's wife did not disclose the truth before dying, but Loris explains that she was silent from fear of being convicted as an accomplice in the crime and being sent to Siberia.

As to who put justice on the track of the murderer and as to who was astute enough or malicious enough to guess the truth and betray him to the police, Loris is entirely ignorant.

Not knowing whether Loris is a most consummate villain or whether he is really

Ne sachant vraiment si Loris est un profond misérable ou un martyr bien à plaindre, Fédora met en doute la véracité du récit qu'elle vient d'entendre.

Pour lui prouver que tout est vrai dans ce qu'il a dit, Loris lui montre la lettre de sa femme Vanda, qu'il a prise dans le tiroir de Vladimir ; cette preuve ne suffisant pas à Fédora, il lui donne à lire toutes les lettres que Vladimir avait adressées à sa femme et que Loris a trouvées chez elle la nuit même du meurtre.

Fédora les prend, eu reconnaît l'écriture et les lit ; au fur et à mesure qu'elle les parcourt, une révolution terrible se fait en elle. Elle voit dans ces lettres que Vladimir parle d'elle avec le plus grand dédain, qu'il jure à sa maîtresse qu'il ne se marie que forcé par son père, qu'il n'aimera jamais que la femme de Loris et que, même après l'odieux mariage qu'on lui impose, sa seule femme continuera d'être elle, et que Fédora ne sera jamais rien pour lui.

Devant ces révélations inattendues, ces preuves irrécusables, Fédora ne doute plus ; mais que faire ?

Elle lui offre de partir elle-même pour la Russie et d'aller demander sa grâce ; s'il ne consent pas, elle restera elle aussi, car elle l'aime maintenant et ne veut plus le quitter.

Loris déclare qu'il est trop tard, qu'il vient justement de recevoir une lettre de son frère Valérien, dans laquelle il lui annonce que ses biens sont confisqués et qu'il est condamné à mort. Devant la misérable existence qui lui est faite désormais, il ne se croit plus le droit d'importuner Fédora de sa présence et de son amour et, en même temps que pour lui faire sa pénible confession, c'est pour lui dire un adieu éternel qu'il est venu cette nuit chez elle.

Mais Fédora se souvient tout-à-coup que Loris ne peut sortir de la maison sans être aussitôt enlevé, assassiné même, par les hommes qu'elle a placés aux alentours pour cela. Si Loris sort, il est perdu, et elle ne peut plus le sauver . . . Elle le supplie donc de rester, d'attendre, de ne pas la quitter . . . Mais il est tard, et Loris insiste pour sortir, ne fût-ce que par le respect qu'il a pour la Princesse et qu'il ne veut pas laisser effleurer par la malveillance du monde.

Devant ce danger imminent, ne se souvenant plus que du martyr de cet innocent, de son amour pour elle et de la mort à laquelle il court ; frémissant aussi d'indignation au souvenir de l'infâmie du lâche et traître Vladimir, Fédora n'hésite plus . . . Elle ne peut pas lui raconter qu'elle-même a placé des gens pour l'assassiner, mais elle le prie, le supplie, au nom de son amour pour lui ! Elle se donne à lui, elle n'a que lui au monde, elle ne veut pas qu'il parte, elle veut le garder. Que lui fait la malveillance publique ? Elle l'aime ! . . .

Et Loris, ~~non~~ moins amoureux, non moins passionné qu'elle, reste chez Fédora !

RIDGAL.

the victim of circumstances that he claims himself to be, Fedora allows herself to doubt the veracity of the story she has just heard.

In order to prove the entire truth of what he has said, Loris shows her the letter of his wife Vanda, which he had found in Vladimir's study; this proof not being sufficient to convince Fedora he gives her to read all Vladimir's letters to Vanda, which Loris had found in his wife's room the night of the murder.

Fedora takes them, recognizes the handwriting and reads them. As she reads a terrible change comes over her. She sees by these letters that Vladimir had spoken of her in terms of the greatest scorn, that he had sworn to his mistress that he was being forced into marriage with Fedora by his father, that he would never love any woman but Vanda and that even after the odious marriage that was forced upon him she would still continue to be his only true wife, and that Fedora would never be anything to him in comparison with herself.

These unexpected revelations, these unimpeachable proofs at last convince Fedora. She no longer doubts! But what is to be done? She offers to go, herself, to Russia and ask for his pardon; if he refuses she will stay and share his exile, for she now loves him and no longer wishes to leave him.

Loris declares that it is too late. He has just received a letter from his brother Valerian, in which the latter announces that all his lands and belongings have been confiscated and that he has been condemned to death! Seeing the miserable existence which lies before him, he no longer feels that he has the right to annoy Fedora with his presence or his love, and tells her that he has come to her, not only in order to lay before her his painful confession, but also to bid her an eternal farewell.

He is about to take his departure, when Fedora suddenly remembers that Loris cannot leave the house without falling into the hands of the very men she has had stationed without. He may even be murdered in the struggle! — — — If Loris crosses the threshold of the house he is lost, and she cannot save him! — — — She begs him to stay, to wait, not to leave her — — — but it is late, and Loris insists upon going, were it only out of respect for the Princess whom he does not wish touched by the slightest breath of scandal.

Before this imminent danger, only remembering the martyrdom of this innocent man, his love for her and the certain death toward which he is unconsciously going, and shuddering, too, with indignation at the remembrance of the false, despicable Vladimir, Fedora no longer hesitates. — — She can not tell him that she has stationed men without to kidnap and perhaps murder him, but she begs, she implores him in the name of her love for him, to stay! — — — She is his, she has but him in the world, he shall not go, he must stay with her! — — — What does she care for scandal? — — She loves him!

And Loris, who is no less in love than she, is won over by her entreaties and — — — stays!

CURTAIN.

ACTE QUATRIÈME.

Nous avons laissé Fédora et Loris dans les bras l'un de l'autre, oubliant les dangers du moment et ne pensant plus aux éventualités redoutables de l'avenir.

Quand le jour est venu, Fédora, congédiant les hommes de police, a bien fait monter Loris sur son yacht, mais ce n'était plus pour le livrer à la justice russe; ils sont allés ensemble dans l'île anglaise de Jersey, sur les côtes de France. Là, ils ont vécu pendant quinze jours, en pleine lune de miel, loin du monde et des témoins importuns.

Cependant, à Paris, leurs amis et connaissances savent ce qui en est et s'entre-tiennent fort de cette escapade amoureuse.

C'est ce que se racontent Siriex et la Comtesse Olga, qui se trouvent en présence dans le salon de Fédora, à Paris, où la princesse et Loris viennent de rentrer après leurs deux semaines d'amour sans mélange.

La Comtesse Olga envie leur sort et leur amour. Elle fait, en effet, à Siriex le récit de ses malheurs personnels. Depuis quinze jours, bien des choses ont traversé son existence; elle ne veut plus se fier à personne désormais, et elle va se retirer loin du monde et de ses perfidies. Elle est désolée et découragée pour toujours. Cet homme qu'elle aimait tant, qu'elle tâchait de lancer et de rendre célèbre, ce prétendu exilé, ce pianiste incomparable, Boleslas Lasinski en un mot, n'était qu'un vil misérable. Elle le croyait jaloux par amour parce qu'il l'empêchait de sortir, la suivait partout et épiait la moindre de ses démarches. . . . Hélas! non! c'était tout simplement un espion du gouvernement russe que l'on avait attaché à ses pas. Depuis qu'elle le sait, elle est désespérée, furieuse, et ne pense plus qu'à disparaître de la société parisienne. Son pianiste l'a rendue à jamais ridicule.

Fédora, elle, pense tout autrement à propos de l'amour. Elle est heureuse au possible, et elle le raconte à Siriex. Celui-ci s'émerveille beaucoup de voir ces redoutables femmes du Nord, s'acharnant à la vengeance, voulant livrer un homme à la torture et à l'échafaud et finissant par tomber dans ses bras en lui criant : Je t'aime!

Toutefois, Siriex est venu voir Fédora pour un motif sérieux; il lui apporte les nouvelles des événements qui se sont passés depuis quinze jours. Il les tient de bonne source, étant secrétaire du Ministre à qui l'on adresse toutes les communications des pays étrangers.

La première nouvelle qu'apporte Siriex est la disgrâce du préfet de police Yariskine; destitué, et probablement arrêté en ce moment à cause de sa mauvaise conduite et de ses nombreux abus de pouvoir, ce farouche tyran n'est plus à craindre aujourd'hui pour Loris.

Les autres nouvelles sont, au contraire, mauvaises et sinistres. Sur une dénonciation, arrivée de Paris au gouvernement russe, on a arrêté le frère de Loris, Valérien Ipanoff, capitaine dans la garde impériale. Yariskine, encore alors préfet de police, l'a fait arrêter comme nihiliste et l'a fait jeter dans un cachot profond au dessous du niveau de la Néva; le fleuve a débordé le jour même, et Valérien est mort noyé dans son cachot. Le lendemain, il était démontré que ce jeune officier n'était pas un nihiliste; l'indignation publique a été portée à son comble contre Yariskine, et cela a été une des causes de sa disgrâce.

ACT FOURTH.

The last act left Fedora and Loris in each others' arms forgetful of the dangers of the present and the perils of the future.

When day breaks Fedora goes out, sends away the detectives and then hurries Loris on board of her yacht, but it is no longer in order to surrender him to the Russian government. They go together to the Isle of Jersey off the coast of France. There they live for several weeks in full honeymoon, far from the world and unwelcome witnesses.

Nevertheless, at Paris, their friends and acquaintances find out the secret and comment is rife about the escapade of the two lovers.

This what Siriex and the Countess Olga are speaking about, when they meet in Fedora's, who, with Loris, has just returned from their stolen visit to the Isle of Jersey.

The Countess Olga envies their experience and their love; in fact she is just now giving Siriex the full recital of her personal grievances. Since two weeks ago many things have changed in her life; she will henceforth believe in no living soul, she is going to go far from the world and its deceits; she is in despair and discouraged for life. . . This man whom she had so loved, whom she had introduced into society and tried to render famous, this pretended exile, this incomparable pianist, Boleslas Lasinski, in fact was nothing but a vile miscreant. She believed him in love and jealous because he did not want her to go out without following her and spying out her slightest actions! . . . Alas! no! He was nothing but a Russian spy! Since she has found this out she is heart-broken, furious, and only thinks of disappearing from Parisian society where she is sure every one is laughing at her.

Fedora, for her part, takes love from an entirely different point of view. She is happy, wondrously happy, and tells Siriex so. The latter is puzzled to account for the hidden motives of action in these women from Northern climes, who throw themselves with all their soul into a scheme of revenge, dooming their victim to the scaffold and end by rushing into his arms crying: "I love you!"

Notwithstanding this, Siriex has come to see Fedora for serious reasons, in fact he brings most important news from Russia. He has them from the most reliable of sources, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The first piece of news which Siriex brings is the disgrace of the Prefect of Police, Yariskine, degraded and probably arrested by this time for his numerous abuses of power. This tyrant, then, is no longer to be feared for Loris.

The rest of the news is bad and disheartening. Upon a denunciation from Paris to the Russian government, Valerian Ipanoff, Loris' brother, captain of the Czar's body-guard, has been arrested. Yariskine, still prefect at this time, has had him thrown into a dungeon below the level of the river Niva, which overflowed during the night, and Valerian was drowned in his cell. The very next day it was fully proven that the young man was innocent and public indignation had been so great over this blunder that it proved one of the potent factors which led to Yariskine's downfall.

Unhappily this disaster is not the only one. The mother of the two Ipanoffs, already broken down by the sentence of death passed on Loris, on hearing of Valerian's frightful end, falls dead. These two sinister events are directly traceable

Malheureusement, ce malheur n'a pas été le seul. La mère des deux Ipanoff, déjà attérée par la condamnation à mort de Loris, est tombée raide morte en apprenant l'épouvantable et injuste fin de Valérien. Ces deux malheurs sont dus au dénonciateur inconnu qui semble s'être si particulièrement acharné contre la famille Ipanoff.

Fédora, épouvantée de son œuvre, perd la tête et s'injurie. . . Semblant s'adresser à une autre personne, elle insulte le misérable dénonciateur, le tigre féroce qui a causé de tels malheurs . . . Et Loris, qui l'entend et qui voit, en entrant dans le salon, la douleur et la colère de sa bien-aimée Fédora, la remercie avec une vive et reconnaissante émotion.

Fédora recule d'abord devant ces remerciements, qu'elle est si loin de mériter, et elle s'écrie qu'elle est une misérable! . . .

— Pourquoi êtes-vous une misérable? demande Loris étonné.

— Parce que, j'ai pu vous croire coupable et criminel, répond la princesse.

— Eh! qu'importe! dit Loris. Vous l'avez cru, comme beaucoup d'autres l'ont cru. Vous ne le croyez plus aujourd'hui, c'est l'essentiel. Vous m'aimez, n'est-ce pas mon bonheur, mon absolution, ma consolation?

Depuis qu'ils sont partis de Paris, il est arrivé plusieurs lettres de Russie pour Loris; elles ont été adressées chez Fédora afin que les espions russes ne les saisissent pas chez lui. Il les prend et les ouvre. Il commence par un télégramme, qui est de son ami Boroff; Loris y lit ces mots: "J'ai obtenu ta grâce."

Sa joie éclate en voyant son honneur réparé, ainsi que sa fortune; il pourra rentrer dans son pays et y épouser Fédora . . .

Puis, il lit les lettres, tandis que Fédora reste muette et glacée de terreur en comprenant que bientôt tout son bonheur va s'évanouir sans espoir de retour.

Dans les lettres que lit Loris, se trouve le lamentable récit de l'épouvantable mort de son frère Valérien et de la triste fin de leur mère bien aimée. Mais Loris y lit aussi qu'on lui révélera le nom de l'infâme accusateur, du dénonciateur qui a ainsi menti et causé tant de maux irréparables.

Ah! comme il tarde à Loris de connaître ce nom et de punir ce lâche et ignoble faussaire!

Fédora tremble de tous ses membres; non certes qu'elle craigne la mort, mais elle sent bien qu'elle va perdre l'amour de Loris . . .

Aussi, supplie-t-elle son amant de rester calme, généreux; de ne plus chercher de vengeance . . . Ne lui reste-t-il pas l'avenir, la fortune et l'amour?

Loris la rassure; il l'aimera toujours, mais il lui est bien permis de rechercher et de punir l'ennemi inconnu qui lui a enlevé son honneur et sa famille. Ce moment ne tardera pas puisque, dès que son ami Boroff sera arrivé à Paris, il saura le nom de l'infâme délateur. Après sa vengeance, il sera tout à Fédora, car il l'aime, il l'adore! . . .

On annonce Boroff. Fédora ne veut pas que Loris le reçoive; elle veut, auparavant, lui dire tout. Elle connaît l'infâme dénonciateur; c'est une femme. Faut-il, doit-on se venger d'une femme?

— Vous la connaissez donc? crie Loris.

— Oui, pardonnez-la, oubliez-la, ayez pitié d'elle!

Ces mots n'arrêtent pas Loris, qui donne l'ordre d'introduire Boroff. En entendant cet ordre, Fédora n'y tient plus; elle avale un poison mortel qu'elle tenait renfermé dans un bijou byzantin, provenant de ses ancêtres les Empercurs de Constantinople, et qu'elle portait constamment suspendu à son cou; elle s'affaisse, elle pâlit et demande tellement grâce pour la coupable que Loris, frappé d'une idée subite, com-

to the unknown denunciation, who seems to be so obstinately bent upon the destruction of the Ipanoff family.

Fedora is thunderstruck at the result of her work of revenge. She loses her head and upbraids herself bitterly, speaking as if she were another person, she insults the miserable person, the blood-thirsty wretch who has caused all this misfortune. . . . And Loris who, as he enters the room, overhears and sees all this—the grief and despair of his beloved Fedora—thanks her with fervent gratitude and adoration in his eyes.

Fedora at first shrinks from his thanks, which she is so far from deserving, and cries out in her anguish that she is a wretch! . . .

“Why a wretch, dear?” asks Loris astonished.

“Because I could have believed you guilty and a criminal,” answers Fedora.

“Well, what of that!” says Loris; “you merely believed what a great many other people believed. You no longer believe it, that is the principal thing. You love me! Is not that my happiness, my absolution, my consolation?”— — — —

Since their departure from Paris, several letters from Russia have arrived for Loris. They have been addressed in care of Fedora so that the Russian spies could not have them seized and opened. He takes them and opens them one by one. He commences, however, with a telegram which is from his friend Boroff. Loris reads these words: “I have obtained your pardon”! — — — His joy is unbounded at thus seeing his honor and his fortune both saved. He can now go back to Russia and wed Fedora— — — He continues reading his letters whilst Fedora stands dumb and frozen with terror, as the thought dawns in her mind that all her present happiness is sure to depart and soon, never to return.

In his letters Loris finds the sad story of his brother's awful death and the terrible end of his beloved mother. But Loris also reads that the name of his infamous accuser is known and will be revealed to him; this wretch who has so lied and intrigued as to cause this horrible succession of calamities.

Ah! How Loris longs to know this name and at last punish the cowardly calumniator!

Fedora trembles from head to foot, not that she fears death, but that she sees that she is about to lose Loris' love.— — —

She only begs her lover to be calm, to be generous, not to seek revenge.— —Has he not her love, his fortune and a great future before him?

Loris reassures her. He will always love her, but he must be allowed to hunt down this man and punish, as it deserves, the crime of the destruction of an innocent family. The moment for justice to be meted out will not be long delayed for, as soon as his friend Boroff arrives in Paris, he will know the name of his infamous traducer. The vengeance once accomplished, he swears to devote himself to her, for he loves her, he worships her! . . .

Boroff is announced. Fedora does not want Loris to receive him. She wants first to tell him something. The infamous traducer whom he seeks is a woman! Will he, ought he to avenge himself on a woman?

“You know her, then?” he cries

“Yes!” she answers. “Ah! Forgive her! forget her! have pity on her!”

The words, however, do not stop Loris, who orders Boroff to be shown in. Fedora, as she hears this order, can bear it no longer; she swallows a deadly poison which she has always carried in the seal of the Byzantine ring which she inherited from her ancestors, the Emperors of Constantinople, and which she carries as a locket. She staggers slightly, grows pale and begs so piteously for the culprit, that Loris,

prend que c'est elle qui l'a dénoncé et qui a causé la mort de ses parents. Il l'accable d'injures et de malédictions....

Mais, la voyant ainsi désespérée, Loris sent bientôt son amour reprendre le dessus ; il veut lui pardonner, il essaie de la rappeler à la vie, il crie au secours !... C'est en vain ! Le poison est inexorable....Fédora meurt sous les baisers de son amant, impuissant à la sauver !

FIN.

struck by a sudden thought, understands at last that it is she who denounced him and has caused the death of his mother and his brother Valerian. He showers upon her his deepest curses and maledictions. — — — But, at last, seeing her so utterly overcome with despair, Loris feels his love for her resume its sway. He pardons her and tries to bring her back to life — he calls for help! — It is too late! — — The poison is fatal! — — — Fedora dies in the arms of her lover, who is powerless to save her!

END.

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ARGUMENT
OF THE PLAY
OF
FEDORA

DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS.

THE MASTER-PIECE
OF
VICTORIEN SARDOU.

AS PRESENTED BY MADAME
SARAH BERNHARDT
AND
HER POWERFUL COMPANY.

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Published by F. RULLMAN, at
THE THEATRE TICKET OFFICE, No. 111 BROADWAY,
NEW YORK.

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To these
posers, singers

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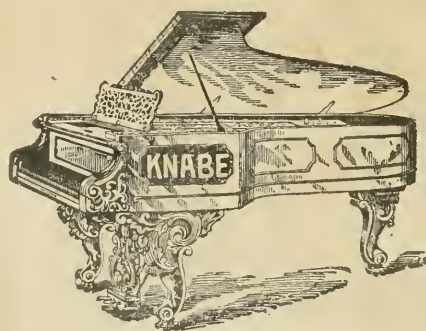
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